

TIIP Projects Awarded

The Makoshika Dinosaur Museum in Glendive, Holter Museum of Art in Helena, Conrad Mansion in Kalispell, Missoula Art Museum and the Castle Museum in White Sulphur Springs have been awarded a total of \$200,000 from the Department of Commerce's Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) "bed tax" grant funds to assist in the completion of tourism-related facility improvements.

Montana Department of Commerce Director Anthony J. Preite approved the TIIP grant funding for the five tourism-related projects following recommendations from the Department of Commerce Montana Promotion Division staff and the state's Tourism Advisory Council. The five TIIP grant recipients were selected from 37 applications submitted for funding to the Commerce Department.

The 2005 TIIP Grant Awards include:

\$38,600—Makoshika Dinosaur Museum for a fire suppression system and exhibit expansion at the downtown Glendive facility that is part of the Montana Dinosaur Trail

\$50,000—Holter Museum of Art for a roof renovation project at the downtown Helena facility

\$41,400—Conrad Mansion for a total upgrade of the historical Kalispell mansion's electrical system

\$50,000—Missoula Art Museum for construction of the Grand Foyer portion of the museum's "Renaissance, Renewal and Renovation Campaign"

\$20,000—Meagher County Historical Association for a window restoration project at the Castle Museum in White Sulphur Springs.

Since 1995, TIIP grants have provided over \$2.2 million in tourism "bed tax" funds to 49 projects in 33 Montana communities. Over that period, TIIP grants have assisted in the development of \$29 million in tourism-related projects.

Butte to Host Round-Up

It's Montana's turn to host the RMI Round-Up in 2006, and Butte has been chosen as the sight of the event. Tour operators from the UK, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Australia as well as US receptive tour operators will converge on Butte to meet with tourism suppliers from MT, ID, WY and SD. RMI overseas and US staff will also be in attendance.

The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, March 29th: Tour operator arrivals in Butte

Thursday, March 30th: Tour operator briefing and fam tour in and around Butte. Community-hosted dinner for tour operators

Friday, March 31st: Marketplace #1 and main dinner for all tour operators and suppliers

Saturday, April 1st: Marketplace #2 and Buckle Club Party

April 2-6th: Official post-fam tour in South Dakota.

The marketplace will be held at the Copper King Inn, although several other facilities are providing lodging and meals. In addition, a host of sponsors are providing breaks, meals, entertainment and transportation. Congratulations Butte!!

To register for the Round-Up, go to www.rmi-realamerica.com or contact Scott Balyo at RMI, sbalyo@rmi-realamerica.com.

Montana Listed Among Top ABA Events

The American Bus Association (ABA) announced that Custer's Last Stand Reenactment near Hardin and Clark on the Yellowstone out of Billings have both been designated as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2006 by an elite tourism industry selection committee. Inclusion in the Top 100 list, published as a supplement to the September/October issue of *Destinations* magazine, indicates that these events offer excellent entertainment value to both tour groups and individual travelers from around the world, said ABA.

Did You Know?

- Both Big Sky and Big Mountain ski resorts were rated in the top 30 picks in *Ski* magazine's Reader Resort Survey for 2006, published in the October '05 issue.
- Big Sky and Moonlight Basin have teamed up to offer a joint lift ticket this winter. A \$78 daily lift ticket will buy access to both mountains with a connected trail system of over 5300 acres, one of the largest in North America.
- The first annual "Going-To-The-Sun Vintage Car Rally" covered over 1,000 miles across Big Sky Country in September and raised \$11,000 for charities—Montana Highway Patrol Foundation, Red Lodge Vocational Education Fund, the Blackfeet Community College for cultural preservation and a charity for environmental preservation.
- The Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) Freelance Council presented \$500 to A Carousel for Missoula.
- Russell County hosted crews for Outdoor Channel programs *Cast & Blast* and *What the Dogs Taught Me*, highlighting pheasant hunting in the Lewistown area.

"The attractiveness of these events as a don't-miss entertainment value is only part of why its selection this year is such a distinction for Montana," said Peter J. Pantuso, ABA's president and CEO. "The real news here is that these events have been recognized as potential magnets for tourism dollars, at a time when reenergizing domestic tourism is so important to our spirit and our economy. The honor gives Montana an important boost in visibility among professional tour planners."

ABA's 2006 Top 100 Events Selection Committee selected Custer's Last Stand Reenactment and Clark on the Yellowstone from among hundreds of U.S. and Canadian events nominated by state and provincial tourism offices and visitors bureaus. Judges considered the events' broad appeal, their accessibility to motorcoaches, skill at handling large groups and a variety of other relevant criteria.

Special Events Grant Program Funds Available

Montana communities, organizations and tribal governments sponsoring or planning new annual events are invited to apply for \$50,000 in state tourism "bed tax" grant funds available from the Montana Department of Commerce, Travel Montana Special Events Grant Program (SEGP). The SEGP application deadline is January 13, 2006.

Events or festivals established prior to May 30, 2003 are not eligible for funding under the program. Grants will be awarded based on a 3-tier approach that ranks counties on the basis of lowest per capita income, slowest

population growth and highest unemployment. The grants are designed to be matching funds for non-profit organizations involved in developing new annual events.

For more information about the SEGP, or to request an application, contact Travel Montana, 406-841-2870. SEGP application materials can be downloaded from Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.mt.gov.



Superhost Training

Is your business prepared to be a good host to our fall and winter visitors? When it's cold outside, warm hospitality is the cure! Envision all of your staff understanding why visitors are coming to Montana and your business, what visitors are looking for when they arrive and welcoming visitors so warmly that they will return many times. This vision becomes reality after a Montana Superhost! customer service training seminar. Montana Superhost! is available to conduct a three-hour, on-site program to provide valuable information to your management and staff. To schedule a session in your community, contact Jodi Smith or Ben Traina at 406-756-3374 or superhost@fvcc.edu.

Welcome Katy

Katy Mack Peterson is the latest addition to Travel Montana's marketing department, taking over as Consumer Marketing Manager. This follows the move of former marketing

manager Sarah Lawlor over to the newly created Public Information Officer position. Katy comes to us from the Great Harvest Bread Company headquarter offices out of Dillon where she worked in the marketing division for the past three years. She is a graduate of Syracuse University where she majored in advertising and studied abroad for a year at Oxford University. In addition to her education, Katy has had internship experiences at advertising agencies in both New York City, NY and Burlington, VT as well as with the American Morgan Horse Association. Travel Montana looks forward to the energy and experience Katy brings to her new position.



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Calendar of Events

November

- 3-13 AFI Fest, Los Angeles, CA
- 4-8 National Tour Association Convention—Detroit, MI
- 11 Montana Promotion Division offices closed
- 14-17 World Travel Market trade show—London, UK
- 24 Montana Promotion Division offices closed

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